APPENDICES

Appendices

Appendix A: Samples of Materials for Focus Groups

A-1: Background for Focus Group Moderators. Pages Appendix-3 to Appendix-4.

A-2: Questions and discussion guide used by TATC in focus groups of employment and training program front line staff and managers. Pages Appendix-5 to Appendix-12.

A-3: Private Industry Council of Snohomish County WA conducted focus groups for JOBS participants and front-line employers. In addition to focus groups, mail surveys and personal interviews were completed using a similarly structured format. All the data was tabulated and categorized and a summary report was prepared. Pages Appendix-13 to Appendix-24.

Appendix A-1: Background for Focus-Group Moderators

A-1. Moderator's Outline

I.   Introduction (5 min)
    A. Thank participants for coming
    B. Introduce yourself
    C. Describe and discuss focus groups
    D. Define qualitative versus quantitative research
    E. Set the ground-rules for discussion (such as,
       When you speak, you represent many others)
    F. Record the session and/or take verbatim notes
    G. Plan warm-up exercise. Each participant gives his/her first name and
       perhaps a brief demographic profile (home town, occupation) --
       but nothing too personal so respondents feel comfortable speaking
       in front of others

II.   Introduce the topic being discussed (20 min)
    A. Ascertain that everyone understands or reviewed the topic?
    B. Ask whether participants have shared the *topic* with anyone else?
    C. Solicit general comments about the topic
    D. Start with broad issues, leading to more specific areas

III. Gauge reaction to topic (60 min)
    A. For each subtopic, ask these questions
       1. What are your feelings about this?
       2. Was/Is it relevant to you?
       3. Was anything confusing?
       4. Do you have suggestions for improvement?
       5. Does anything need more emphasis?
    B. Repeat 1 through 5 above for each subtopic. Use such techniques as word
       association, sentence completion and visual props to uncover feelings that
       Otherwise might be withheld.

IV. Thank you (5 min)

V.   Give a small gift or stipend to the participants.

*Note: *Customers in Focus,* a complete guide to focus-group design and moderation, is a companion document to the *Voice of the Customer.* If you have not received this document, you can request a copy by contacting your U.S. Department of Labor regional office.

A skilled moderator is the key to productive focus groups. To be a good moderator:

- Know the goals of the focus group and the discussion outline very well; think on your feet.
- Relax everyone. Start with an icebreaker or relaxing talk. Introduce everyone, using first names. Provide name cards.
- Be unbiased. Don't put ideas into people's heads or words into their mouths.
- Ask one question at a time.
- Probe with follow-up questions. Don't accept superficial answers.
- Call on all participants. Prevent the vocal minority from dominating the discussion.
- Keep control of the group. Don't allow participants to chat; don't allow everyone to talk at once. Discourage side conversations.
- Keep the discussion on track. Watch the time carefully.
- Encourage minority opinions. Challenge inconsistencies and illogical thinking.
- Play dumb when necessary. A good way to get information is to put participants in the roles of teachers and yourself in the role of a naive inquirer who has never had exposure to the subject.
- Listen. Demonstrate a sincere interest in what participants have to say and allow them to express their opinions.

U.S. Department of Labor
Regional Office Focus Groups On Capacity Building

Front-Line Staff Protocol

Background

ETA is currently conducting a number of capacity building efforts to enhance the effectiveness and strengthen the caliber of services provided through programs authorized under JTPA and other Federal employment and training programs. The conduct of focus groups with Program Managers/Directors and Front-Line Staff by DOL Regional Office staff is one part of this effort.

Purpose of Focus Groups

The purpose of the focus groups is to obtain information on current and future training and technical assistance needs of employment and training professionals, with a specific emphasis on staff members who perform "front-line" client-interface functions, such as: recruitment, in-take, information and referral, assessment, counseling, training, case management, provision of supportive services, and job development/employer relations.

Participants

This focus group should consist of 6 to 10 front-line staff members. Front-line staff are those individuals in the employment and training system who have direct contact with either the participant of the employer. Please note that front-line staff do not include those individuals who perform primarily administrative functions such as supervision, planning, contracting, monitoring or finances. When soliciting answers to the following set of questions, **please focus participant comments on the needs of front-line staff and their co-workers**, rather than on the needs of those persons who perform supervisory, management, or planning functions.

Agenda

I.   Introductions: Prior to beginning the meeting, please go around the room and ask participants to introduce themselves to the group. Ask participants to provide their: Name, Job Title, Organization. Hand out and collect the Participant Demographic Forms. **(Time: 5 Minutes)**

II.   Review Purpose of the Meeting and Agenda, Role of Facilitator, Ground Rules **(Time: 5 Minutes)**

III. Focus Group Discussion

    A.   Career Development Issues **(Time: 20 Minutes)**
    B.   Front-Line Staff Functions, Past Training, and Present/Future Training Needs **(Time: 60 Minutes)**
    C.   Program Models, Technical Assistance **(Time: 20 Minutes)**
    G.   Wrap Up **(Time: 10 Minutes)**

Total Time is 120 minutes.

Please note that before some of the questions on the following chart there is an asterisk which denotes that it is a priority question and adequate time should be spent on it.

Technical Assistance and Training Corporation

The following are discussion points for the focus group with front-line staff. Two definitions are important to remember. Front-line staff are those individuals in the employment and training systems who have direct contact with the customer (i.e., the participant or the employer). Capacity building is defined as the training, professional development, career development, and other activities aimed at increasing the knowledge, skills and abilities of training and employment staff (e.g., training, workshops, conferences, job aids or written material, technology).

FACILITATOR'S QUESTIONS FOR FRONT-LINE STAFF FOCUS GROUP

SUBJECT AREA	CONTEXTUAL STATEMENT	PRIMARY QUESTIONS	PROBING QUESTIONS	TIME
I. FRONT-LINE STAFF CAREER DEVELOPMENT ISSUES	"The focus of the first area of discussion is on finding out how you gained the skills necessary to perform your job and on identifying the methods used in your agency to determine your on-going training needs."	*1. How did you learn to perform your job? 2. What methods does your agency use to gather information on your training needs?	a. What kinds of training have you received? b. How did you receive this training (formal education, OJT, in-service)? c. Which was most effective? d. When did you receive this training (prior to coming on the job, once you were on the job)? e. What type of training would you have liked to receive? a. How frequently is this done? b. Who performs this assessment? c. Is the identification of training needs part of your agency's staff evaluation system? d. Do you feel your supervisor has a good understanding of your training needs? e. If not, what could be done to improve the understanding?	20 MIN

*Priority Questions

SUBJECT AREA	CONTEXTUAL STATEMENT	PRIMARY QUESTIONS	PROBING QUESTIONS	TIME
II. FRONT-LINE STAFF **JOB FUNCTIONS AND PAST TRAINING, TRAINING NEEDS, AND TRAINING RESOURCES**	"Let's talk about your basic job functions and for which of these functions you feel current training is adequate and for which you think new training or technical assistance approaches need to be developed."	*1. How has your job changed in the past 5 years (or since you began)? _____ 2. _____ In what subject areas do you feel you have received adequate training? *3. In what subject areas do you feel you require additional training? 4. In general, how satisfied are you with the choice of training programs that is currently available to you? _____ 5. _____ In general, how satisfied have you been with the quality of the training that you have received? _____ 6. _____ In general, how satisfied have you been with the opportunity to participate in training?	a. What things are you doing more of or less of than you used to? b. What subjects do you need a better understanding of today than you used to? c. What subjects do you no longer need to know or do not use today? _____ What _____ are your three most important needs for additional training? _____ What _____ subject areas are lacking appropriate training opportunities? _____ In _____ what topic areas is the current training especially good and what areas need improvement? In what area would you like more training made available to you?	35 MIN
CONTINUATION OF PREVIOUS PAGE	 _____ _____ "Now, I would like to talk about the changes that are occurring in the employment and training system and how they are likely to affect your job functions and responsibilities." _____ "Let's talk a little about certification and skill standards for front-line staff. I want to know whether you support establishment of skill standards and, if you do, obtain your ideas about how this can be successfully accomplished."	*7. Think about the best training program you have ever attended. What made this training good? _____ _____ *1. In what ways do you think your job will change in the future due to the impact of Federal, state, or local initiatives, e.g., One Stop, Welfare Reform, Reinventing Government or Management Improvements, Customer Service or TQM? _____ *2. _____ Do you think a certification program or skills standards for front-line staff positions would be useful? Definition: Skills standards are a set of skills, knowledge and abilities, based on job requirements that would allow a person to be certified or accredited in a subject matter area and which could be transferable to different organizations.	a. What topics were covered in the training? b. Who designed and delivered the training? c. What approach did the trainer use? Were there special activities involved? _____ a. What kinds of special training or technical assistance do you think you might need to deal with these initiatives? b. What do you think is the best way to disseminate this training or technical assistance? a. Would you be more likely to attend a "certified" course? b. Do you think certification would help your career? c. Who should be responsible for setting standards and requirements? d. At what level should certification be done -- national, regional, state, local?	___ ___ 25 MIN

* - Priority Questions

SUBJECT AREA	CONTEXTUAL STATEMENT	PRIMARY QUESTIONS	PROBING QUESTIONS	TIME
III. PROGRAM MODELS, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE	"Finally, I would like for us to talk about how the Department of Labor can best stimulate information exchange among employment and training professionals, including the development and distribution of successful program models and other technical assistance."	1. In what specific areas would you be most interested in getting information on successful program models and other "best practices"? _____*2. What would you consider "easy access" to getting additional information about what others are doing across the country (e.g., electronic bulletin boards, TTRC, case studies, other printed material, videos)?	Would having this type of information help you do your job better? _____What do you think is the most effective way of sharing these models with other front line staff across the country? _____	20 MIN
IV. WRAP UP	"Before we wrap things up, I would like to open the discussion for you to bring up any other issues that you would like to discuss on this topic."	_____3. Do you have successful program models from your organization that could be shared with others? _____Are there any other issues related to training and technical assistance that we have not discussed that you would like to bring up?		10 MIN

* - Priority Questions

U.S. Department of Labor
Regional Office Focus Groups on Capacity Building

Program Managers/Directors Protocol

Background

ETA is currently conducting a number of capacity building efforts to enhance the effectiveness and strengthen the caliber of services provided through programs authorized under JTPA and other Federal employment and training programs. The conduct of focus groups with Program Managers/Directors and Front-Line staff by DOL Regional Office staff is one part of this effort.

Purpose of Focus Groups

The purpose of these focus groups is to obtain information on current and future training and technical assistance needs of employment and training professionals, with a specific emphasis on staff members who perform "front-line" client-interface functions, such as: recruitment, in-take, information and referral, assessment, counseling, training, case management, provision of supportive services, and job development/employer relations.

Participants

This focus group should consist of 6 to 10 program director/managers/supervisors who have immediate and substantial knowledge of the training and development needs of front-line staff. When soliciting answers to the following set of questions, **please focus participant comments on the needs of those people who perform these front-line functions,** rather than on the needs of those persons who perform supervisory, management, or planning functions.

Agenda

I.   Introductions: Prior to beginning the meeting, please go around the room and ask participants to introduce themselves to the group. Ask participants to provide their: Name, Job Title, Organization. Hand out and collect the Participant Demographic Forms. **(Time: 5 Minutes)**

II.   Review Purpose of the Meeting and Agenda, Role of Facilitator, Ground Rules **(Time: 5 Minutes)**

III.   Focus Group Discussion

     A.   Career Development Issues **(Time: 10 Minutes)**
     B.   Front-Line Staff Functions **(Time: 30 Minutes)**
     C.   Front-Line Staff Training Needs and Training Resources **(Time: 30 Minutes)**
     D.   Ideal and Realistic Training System and Role of Department of Labor **(Time: 30 Minutes)**
     E.   Certification **(Time: 15 Minutes)**
     F.   Program Models, Technical Assistance **(Time: 15 Minutes)**
     G.   Wrap Up **(Time: 10 Minutes)**

Total Time is 150 minutes.

Please note that before some of the questions on the following chart there is an asterisk which denotes that it is a priority question and adequate time should be spent on it.

Technical Assistance and Training Corporation

The following are discussion points for the focus group with front-line staff. Two definitions are important to remember. Front-line staff are those individuals in the employment and training systems who have direct contact with the customer (i.e., the participant or the employer). Capacity building is defined as the training, professional development, career development, and other activities aimed at increasing the knowledge, skills and abilities of training and employment staff (e.g., training, workshops, conferences, job aids or written material, technology).

FACILITATOR'S QUESTIONS FOR PROGRAM MANAGERS/DIRECTORS FOCUS GROUP

SUBJECT AREA	CONTEXTUAL STATEMENT	PRIMARY QUESTIONS	PROBING QUESTIONS	TIME
I. FRONT-LINE STAFF CAREER DEVELOPMENT ISSUES	"The focus of the first area of discussion is on finding out how front-line staff learn to perform their jobs and on identifying the methods your agency uses to to determine front-line staff training needs."	1. In general, how do most front-line staff members learn to perform their jobs? 2. What methods does your agency use to gather information on the training and development needs of front-line staff?	Where and how did they receive this training – through formal education, OJT, in-service training? a. Who performs the assessment and how frequently? b. Can you think of ways to improve how this data is collected?	10 MIN
II. FRONT-LINE STAFF FUNCTIONS	"Now, I would like to talk about the changes are occurring in the employment and training system and how they are likely to affect the job functions of front-line staff."	1. How have front-line staff positions changed in the past 5 years? *2. In what ways do you expect the basic sets of job functions performed by front-line staff to change in the future due to the impact of federal, state, or local initiatives, e.g., One Stop, Welfare Reform, Reinventing Government or Management Improvements, Customer Service or TQM?	a. What things are they doing more of or less of than they used to? b. Are there different knowledge, skills and abilities front-line staff need to do the job? c. What are these new knowledge, skills and abilities? a. What kinds of special training or technical assistance needs are you likely to have (or currently have) to deal with these initiatives? b. What do you think is the best way to disseminate this training or technical assistance?	30 MIN

* - Priority Questions

SIMPLY BETTER! *Continuous Improvement*

SUBJECT AREA	CONTEXTUAL STATEMENT	PRIMARY QUESTIONS	PROBING QUESTIONS	TIME
III. FRONT-LINE STAFF TRAINING NEEDS AND TRAINING RESOURCES	"Let's talk a little bit about how training for front-line staff is provided in your agency. I also want to identify in what areas current training is adequate and in what areas new training or technical assistance approaches need to be developed."	1. How are front-line staff training programs structured in your agency?	a. Who develops the training/technical assistance and accompanying materials? b. Who delivers the training? c. How long does the training typically last? d. How do you pay for the training?	30 MIN
		2. In general, how satisfied are you with the choice of training programs that is currently available for your front-line staff? 3. In general, how satisfied have you been with the quality of the training that your front line staff have received? 4. In what subject areas do you feel that your front-line staff have received adequate training? *5. In what subject areas do you feel your front-line staff require additional training? *6. What do you see as the greatest barriers to providing this training(e.g.,no funds, no training available, no interest)?	What subject areas are lacking appropriate training and professional development opportunities? In what topic areas is the current training especially good and in what areas are current training programs in need of improvement?	

| IV. IDEAL AND REALISTIC TRAINING SYSTEM AND ROLE OF U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR | "Let's now talk about some "big picture" issues regarding capacity building for employment and training professionals within the system. I want to get some of your ideas on what a "system" for capacity building would ideally and realistically look like and your views on whether one is actually needed. I also want to talk about what you see as the appropriate roles for different entities within the system (e.g., U.S. Department of Labor National and Regional Offices)." | *1. What would an "ideal and realistic system" look like for the design, development and delivery of training for front-line staff?

*2. How do you think we can develop a true partnership in the capacity building system involving all the major stakeholders in the employment and training system? | a. What characteristics would it have (e.g., local vs. state vs. regional vs. national based; mandatory vs. voluntary participation)?

b. How would the system be structured and who would oversee it?

c. What would be the appropriate mix of training vs. technical assistance?

d. How would the training system be funded?

e. Who would be responsible for the development of the training/technical assistance materials?

a. What should be the roles of US DOL National and Regional Offices? | 30 MIN |
| V. CERTIFICATION | "Let's now talk for a few minutes about your thoughts on a certification program or skill standards for front-line staff in the employment and training system.

Definition: Skills standards are a set of knowledge, skills and abilities, based on job requirements, that would allow a person to be certified or accredited in a subject matter area and which could be transferable to different organizations. | Do you think it would be advantageous to develop a certification program/skills standards for front-line staff positions? | b. What should be the roles of the states?

c. What should be the role of local organizations?

a. If yes, what would be the goal of such a system?

b. Who would be responsible for setting standards and requirements?

c. At what level should certification be done: national, regional, state or local?

d. Would you be more likely to send front-line staff | 15 MIN |

* - Priority Questions

SUBJECT AREA	CONTEXTUAL STATEMENT	PRIMARY QUESTIONS	PROBING QUESTIONS	TIME
VI. PROGRAM MODELS, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE	"Finally, I would like for us to talk about how the Department of Labor can best stimulate information exchange among employment and training professionals, including the development and distribution of successful program models and other technical assistance."	1. In what topic areas would your front-line staff benefit from receiving successful program models and other technical assistance? 2. What mechanisms do you think could be established to best disseminate information on successful programs and best practices?	a. How could this information be translated into training for front-line staff? b. In what form should this information be distributed?	15 MIN
_____VII. WRAP UP	"Before we wrap things up, I would like to open the discussion for you to bring up any other issues that you would like to discuss on this topic."	_____3._____ Do you have successful program models from your organization that could be shared with others? _____Are_____ there any other issues related to training and technical assistance that we have not discussed that you would like to bring up?		— — 10 MIN

* - Priority Questions

SECTION I: CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS AND FOCUS GROUP CONTRIBUTORS

<u>Characteristics of Respondents in Surveys and Interviews</u>

Mail surveys and personal interviews were completed for 291 respondents using a similarly structured format that recorded their written responses. Respondents had the following characteristics and backgrounds:

1. <u>AFDC Type</u>

Single parent household	242/83%
Two parent household; one parent physically not able to work	6/2%
Two parent household; both parents physically able to work	28/10%
Other	13/5%

2. <u>JOBS Participation</u>

JOBS Participant	152/52%
Not a JOBS Participant	77/26%
Attended Orientation	35/12%
Don't know	27/9%

3. <u>Attended Education/Training Program in Past Two Years</u>

Has attended	144/49%
Has not attended	101/35%
Currently attending	59/20%
Satisfactorily completed	61/21%
Did not complete	16/5%

4. <u>Worked in Past 2 Years</u>

Working now	47/16%
Has worked, but not working now	82/28%
Has not worked	148/51%
Looked for work, but did not find it or did not accept a job	14/5%

5. Considered or Tried to Start a Business

Running a business now   5/2%

Considered it, but did not try   70/24%

Tried, but stopped it   14/5%

Focus Group Contributors

In addition to the surveys and interviews, information was collected in focus groups with comments recorded for open ended questions. The following types of groups participated:

AFDC/JOBS Recipients	Seven focus group sessions were held with recipients. They were put together as follows: four groups were organized through DSHS; two groups were organized from Snohomish County Human Services Project Self-Sufficiency participants who were recipients; and one group was conducted for JOBS recipients in PIC/JTPA programs.
AFDC/JOBS Case Workers and Line Staff	One focus group was organized for DSHS and ES caseworkers, counselors, and case managers.
JTPA/County Case Managers	One focus group was organized from case managers in JTPA and Project Self-Sufficiency.
Administrators	One focus group was organized from administrators and managers for DSHS, ES, PIC/JTPA and Snohomish County Human Services programs.

SECTION II: RELATIVE RANKINGS OF ISSUES RELATED TO TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Written comments for surveys and interviews were tabulated to provide a relative ranking for the importance of twelve topic areas based upon the number of responses or comments recorded. (Note: Only comments from surveys and interviews were tabulated for this ranking.) This relative ranking is:

Topic	Nos	Percentage
Rules for Income and Other Financial Resources	136	47%
Medical/Dental Coverage and Healthcare	136	47%
Assistance for Childcare	109	37%
Assistance for Finding a Training Program and Getting Into It	106	36%
Assistance for Transportation	101	35%
Food	95	33%
Clothing	87	30%
Help in Solving Problems During Training	68	23%

Rules for Who Cannot Be Included in Household	52	18%
Help in Applying for Work	49	17%
Help in Solving Problems After Starting Work	31	11%
Help in Solving Problems that Come Up as a Result of Trying to Start a Business	19	7%

SECTION III: SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

Comments from surveys, interviews and focus groups were divided into three categories for: specific barriers to employment and self-employment that could be removed through changes in the rules and regulations; customer service comments for issues pertaining to everyday operations and procedures in AFDC and JOBS offices; general remarks that may pertain to employment, but are also more general to how the welfare program is administered or in cases to issues outside of public assistance that affect low income households.

Specific Barriers to Training and Employment From Surveys and Interviews

Assistance for Finding a
Training Program

Gaining approval for longer plans, or being allowed to continue them if welfare's changed, are concerns.

Gaining approval for training plans can be difficult.

Lack of information on what exists and how programs will affect the grant and other resources.

Time lag for verifying public assistance to determine JTPA eligibility can be too long.

Rules for Income and Other
Financial Resources

Grant reduction if you get a paycheck is a disincentive to go out and get a job. A number of comments stated you can't dig your way out or get ahead and the disincentives are too strong. E.g., guidelines are so low that once you start making any money you stop qualifying, get cut off, and end up back at square one.

Child support can terminate a client from the grant and benefits without enough money to further support herself. This can occur without warning.

Getting on-the-job training is a concern because your grant is immediately effected.

Changes in circumstances of the recipient (e.g. receives support one month and then it stops) end up changing the grant in a way that is difficult to budget. *This can be retroactive and without warning.*

Timelags from when money is earned and when it is deducted are very long. If the job ends, your grant is still reduced based upon prior months earnings, even though you are not earning the same paycheck anymore.

INTRODUCTIONS

Q   Please describe the role your personnaly playn in assisting clients to access training and employment services.

Social Worker: She is suppose to be working with young parents who need to finish high school, but spends the majority of her time processing daycare paperwork. Her clients are JOBS recipients.

Social Worker: Caseload is parents 23 1/2 and up. Refugee, good cause, income assistance. Like the Social Worker before, child care takes an enormous amount of work to help the client find work that fits with them and what's out there.

ES - JOBS Staff Person: She feels that she is the continuant to being employed. She assists clients in receiving the training needed to become employable. She relies heavily on the FSS's and SW's to deal with the forms that help them become employable.

Financial Worker: Refers to JOBS program. She does not have a lot to do with employment and training aspects of it.

Financial Service Specialist: She works with AFDC. Looks at possible barriers on the initial opening and when the review comes up then I look to see if I can refer the client to JOBS. At the JOBS orientation they will go into more depth as to whether or not there truly is a barrier.

Q   What are some goals that you would like to see acheived?

*   Daycare caseload assigned to one person.

*   On-going meetings with finanacial workers, (which would include ES).

*   Child care on JFIS system and paid out of Olympia.

*   Eliminate the SSPS system

*   Expand child care transitional benefits to 2 years

*   Raise grant standards to establish more stability

*   Offer a "choices" class. The old "success" group was brought up. Talked about making long term decisions for people volunteering for JOBS.

*   Make JOBS mandatory.

*   Medical assistance for all - This goal is outside the boundaries of AFDC rules, but if medical benefits were available to everyone maybe people would not need to go on assistance just to get medical paid for.

*   No resource limit on one vehicle. Transportation is a big barrier.

*   Make it mandatory to staff the offices appropriately.

DISCUSSION/COMMENTS

The program started out as a self-sufficiency program, and that's kind of what we've been pushing all along. A couple of us have a problem with the Income Assistance Child Care Program. When people are working in 7-11's, and daycare centers and they're spending all of their time working on these part-time jobs when they probably could be getting some training and eventually getting off the system.

We feel that the daycare money could be better used for expanding the transitional program and helping the people, rather than them sitting there spinning their wheels on a part-time job where they pay out more in daycare than what they are making. Then there is the other side of the coin where some people feel that any job is better than no job.

Q   What are you seeing as barriers?

I think there are some problems with DSHS/ES. ES sees people as skills and abilities. Different skills, abilities and education. DSHS has the tendency to see everybody as the same and I don't think that's a reality in the communities that we live in. Not everybody is created equal.

Communication with programs. Staff, other programs, financial workers, social workers. It's such an important priority to make things work for clients. A common eligibility format, whether it's JTPA, school programs, JOBS, ES programs. A common assessment of tools. The fact that you were tested by DVR, and that those test results should be available to the client, the next counselor, the next interviewer, the next Social Worker who needs it.

The 100 hour rule needs to be changed. We penalize two-parent households as a result. Income based, rather than deduction based, for the time frames to transitionalize people rather than to just ZAP them off. We are also penalizing them with overpayments.

Computer access to all programs. Which is part of the communication thing. It means either changing the computer systems again or cross-training.

Paperwork on daycare is absolutely bizarre. ES produces a piece of paper that goes to a social worker who produces more paperwork that finally gets to the client. This process needs to be simplified.

Agency bashing, program bashing, staff bashing. We need to get away from that. We all have our pet peeves because we have not communicated. We have not worked out issues and as long as we stay separate we are going to have those bashings.

Accountability for the clients. The clients are very much a part of the program. They are making choices. Clients ownership of the program. That we are problem solvers with them not making problems for them.

Caseload issues. We need more personal contact. More personal information going back and forth, with little or no paper.

Clients that go into programs unapproved. They won't ever become employed. Nothing says a person can't go to school full time and not participate in JOBS.

Time spent going to school. There are no rules for a time limit. They can postpone to job hunt and go to school for ever as a dodge around employment. Participating in JTPA affects the AFDC grant. The rules need to be looked at closely.

I was just talking to my supervisor this morning, and "E" households have to be either working, or in a work experience program. We can't sell them the tool for the training they need and have that count.

There is no component for volunteering. There is no childcare for volunteering. That's different than work experience. That's different than on-the-job training. I think it's a valuable component for our clients except that there is nothing for them there.

Clients taking out student loans. It doesn't impact their food stamps, grant or daycare. They are borrwoing when they don't need to.

Q   In your role, what is the most frustrating reason for clients not getting employed?

Availability to areas. Transportation to areas using resources in those areas.

Work experience. You know you can't volunteer to work at your neighbor's house, drinking coffee, making cookies, you know, that kind of thing. We need some sort of ideas contributing back to the community.

Low self esteem.

Little sense of personal or physical boundaries.

Unrealistic belief in "magic".

lack of coordination between agencies.

Transportation. You basically choose where you live for the most part.

Instability in their lives. They move a lot, constant choas, and end up dropping out of training.

Health issues for themselve and their kids.

Lack of support.

Dealing with frail people. They need extra time in order to give the good support.

SURVEY

This survey is being conducted to hear from AFDC/JOBS recipients. Your participation is voluntary and your responses will be confidential. They will not affect your grant or become part of your case record. They will help us to identify problems that people like yourself have in trying to become employed or self-employed.

1. Are you receiving AFDC and are you:

   ☐ in a single parent household.

   ☐ in a two parent household, but one parent is physically not able to work.

   ☐ in a two parent household and both parents are able to work.

   ☐ _____

2. Are you in the JOBS program?

   ☐ Yes, I am in the JOBS program.

   ☐ No, I am not in the JOBS program.

   ☐ No, but I have attended an orientation.

   ☐ I do not know.

3. In the past two years, have you attended an education or job training program?

   ☐ Yes, I attended _____

   ☐ No, because _____

   ☐ Current

   If you answered "yes", please answer these additional questions.

   ☐ Who paid for or sponsored the program(s) you attended? _____

   ☐ Did you complete the program(s) you attended?

      ☐ Yes

      ☐ No. I am currently attending.

      ☐ No. I did not complete because _____

4. In the past two years have you worked?

   ☐ Yes, I am working now.

   ☐ Yes I have worked, but am not working now because _____

   ☐ No, I have not worked because _____

   ☐ No I looked for work, but did not find it or did not accept it because_____

5. In the past two years have you considered or tried to start you own business?

   ☐ Yes, I am running my own business now.

   ☐ I considered it, but did not try because_____

   ☐ I tried, but have stopped because _____

6. We need your help in identifying which public assistance rules and procedures that you think are bottlenecks for people trying to become employed or start their own business. Please think about each item. If you have had a problem getting a service or have come up against a problem in the rules for public assistance concerning an item, describe it or suggest what needs to be changed. Please be brief and direct. All of your ideas will be helpful to us.

   ☐ Assistance for finding a training program and getting into it. _____

   _____

   ☐ Rules for income and other financial resources. _____

   _____

Example Focus Group
For
JOBS Recipients in Non-JTPA Training,
Employed or Self-Employed

<u>MEMBERSHIP</u>

10-12 JOBS recipients who can speak about their personal experiences with regards to getting training, starting work or starting their own business while on public assistance during the past two years or less.

<u>PURPOSE</u>

To obtain perceptions, thoughts and information from current JOBS participants about whether the current rules, regulations and requirements for receiving public assistance have stymied or created problems for them in their efforts to become employed or self-employed.

<u>QUESTIONS</u>

1. Please briefly describe the experience you have had in the past two years to get training, become employed or start your own business.

2. In your efforts to get training, become employed or start your own business have there been things you have wanted to do or try that you could not do because the current rules for public assistance prevented you?

3. You will be read a short list of types of help that recipients generally need in order to participate in training, become employed or self-employed. In your opinion and from your own experience are there changes in the rules or procedures that could be made so that this help would work better for you?

    - Rules for Income and Financial Resources
    - Childcare
    - Medical/Healthcare
    - Transportation Assistance
    - Food and Clothing
    - Household Membership
    - Career Counseling and Assessment
    - Assistance in Applying for Programs
    - Allowable Training Plans and Programs
    - Assistance for Problems that Come Up During Training
    - Assistance in Applying for and Starting Work
    - Allowable Work Hours
    - Assistance for Problems that Come Up after Starting Work
    - Assistance to Someone Trying to Start a Business
    - Assistance for Problems that Come Up in Running a Business
    - Other Types of Assistance Not Listed (Explain)

4. Thank you very much. What do you think is the most important
    issue we have identified today that is a barrier or roadblock in
    the rules for public assistance themselves and may work to keep
    recipients from becoming employed or self-employed? How would
    you change the rule so there would be no barrier?

5. Finally, is there anything you would like to add to what we have
    talked about today that will help us to understand how the
    current rules and regulations might limit or reduce a recipient's
    opportunities and chances to become employed or self-employed?

Example Focus Group
for
DSHS and ES Line Staff

Membership

10-12 line staff for the Departments of Social and Health Services
(JOBS and AFDC), Employment Security who have responsibilities as
caseworkers and job specialists.

Purpose

To obtain perceptions and thoughts from professional staff who work
directly with public assistance recipients about the obstacles and
barriers created by the rules, regulations and everyday operating
procedures that then stymie their clients' efforts to become employed
and self-employed.

Questions

1. Please describe the role you personally play in assisting clients
    to access training and employment services.

2. In your role, what specifically do you see as the most frustrating
    reason for clients not succeeding in becoming employed or self-
    employed and leaving public assistance?

3. In your work with clients, are there specific obstacles or
    barriers in the rules for public assistance that you find limit or
    reduce opportunities your clients could have to prepare themselves
    and become employed or self-employed?

4. In your contacts and work with other agencies or programs on
    behalf of your clients, are there rules or issues that arise in
    these programs that hinder or block your efforts to develop and
    follow through on plans and strategies for your clients? Consider
    JTPA, Employment Security, DSHS, community colleges etc.

5. You will be read a short list of types of assistance that clients
    generally need in order to participate in training and go on to
    employment or self-employment. In your opinion and from your
    everyday experiences, are there changes in the rules or procedures
    that could be made so that this assistance would work better for
    your clients to become employed or self-employed?

    -   Rules for Income and Financial Resources
    -   Childcare
    -   Medical/Healthcare
    -   Transportation Assistance
    -   Food and Clothing
    -   Household Membership
    -   Career Counseling and Assessment
    -   Assistance in Applying for Programs
    -   Allowable Training Plans and Programs
    -   Assistance for Problems that Come Up During Training
    -   Assistance in Applying for and Starting Work

- Allowable Work Hours
- Assistance for Problems that Come Up after Starting Work
- Assistance to Someone Trying to Start a Business
- Assistance for Problems that Come Up in Running a Business
- Other Types of Assistance Not Listed (Explain)

6. Thank you very much. At this time do you have anything you would like to add that would increase our understanding of the roadblocks and obstacles created in the rules and regulations for public assistance that work against helping a recipient become employed or self-employed?